

SHORT COMMUNICATIONS

FICEDULA FLYCATCHERS IN EAST AFRICA Backhurst, Britton & Mann (1973) and other recent authors admit two Palaearctic flycatchers in the genus *Ficedula* to the avifauna of East Africa: the Pied Flycatcher *F. hypoleuca* and the Collared Flycatcher *F. albicollis* (both the nominate race and the eastern *semitorquata*). Records of males in black and white adult plumage, supported by specimens or critical and detailed field descriptions, are assignable to one of these three taxa, but birds in other plumages are often intermediate. An examination of the specimens and descriptions of birds reported as *hypoleuca* in Uganda and western Kenya has shown that there is no entirely satisfactory record. Apart from the problem of identification, the taxonomy of the three taxa involved is also confused. Voous (1977) recognizes three species while other authors admit two, including *semitorquata* either with *albicollis* (for example Vaurie 1959) or with *hypoleuca* (for example Mackworth-Praed & Grant 1960). Following Vaurie (1959) for nomenclature, the reappraisal detailed below confirms that the Collared Flycatcher (represented by two races) is a regular visitor to parts of East Africa (mainly western Tanzania), while further data might reveal that the Pied Flycatcher winters in small numbers in the forests of Uganda and western Kenya.

Most records of the Collared Flycatcher are from miombo woodland in Tanzania (west of 36°E), where it is regular and sometimes reasonably common in January to February in parts of the Tabora and Iringa regions, and fairly common on passage (28 September to 6 November, 20 February to 4 March) in Kibondo District (Backhurst et al. 1973, I.H. Dillingham *in litt.*). Both *semitorquata* and the nominate race are involved. The latter is common on autumn passage in Rwanda (Vande weghe 1979) and the only race known from Zambia (Benson, Brooke, Dowsett, and Irwin 1971), yet males from Kibondo on 24 February and 6 October (Dillingham *in litt.*) and a female from Ng'iya in western Kenya on 2 October (Britton & Britton 1973, racial determination by D.J. Pearson) are the only definite records from East Africa. There are specimens or good sight records of adult male *semitorquata* from Iringa, Njombe and Tabora in January-February, Kibondo on 21 February, Budongo Forest and Butiaba in western Uganda on 22 February and 15 March, and the Mara River in western Kenya on 3 March (Backhurst et al. 1973, Chapin 1953, Mann 1974, Dillingham *in litt.*). These records provide little evidence of passage of the Collared Flycatcher through Uganda and western Kenya, but several of the indeterminate birds (east to Nairobi) listed below probably belong here.

An immature male collected at Kakamega Forest in western Kenya on 8 December 1965 was claimed by Ripley & Bond (1971) as a first record of *F. hypoleuca* for Kenya. At the instigation of G.C. Backhurst, J.S. Ash examined this specimen critically and concluded (*in litt.*) that it should be relegated to an 'almost certain' category, as the possibility of *semitorquata* could not be excluded entirely. A number of other indeterminate birds, many of them originally claimed as *hypoleuca*, are listed below. Apart from the wintering birds in the forests of western Kenya, which might be *hypoleuca*, dates suggest passage, which would fit with nominate *albicollis* or *semitorquata en route* to and from winter quarters in the southern tropics:

Kakamega Forest: female collected on 24 December 1970 (J.F. Harper), one seen on 31 January 1971 (C.F. Mann), two seen on 21 November (H.A. Britton, PLB), and two seen on 31 October 1974 (D.A. Turner).

Mt Elgon: females collected on 5 November 1926 (Granvik 1934) and 14 January 1976 (J.G. Williams).

Mau Narok: adult male seen on 20 December 1974 (P.H.B. Sessions).

Nairobi: one seen on 14-18 October 1974 (D.A. Turner).
 Kampala: singles seen on 29 September 1966 (D.J. Pearson) and 24 September 1968 (R. Frankum), adult male seen on 26 February 1968 and female ringed on 7 September 1970 (R. Frankum).
 Kabalega Falls National Park: single adult males seen at Paraa and Chobe in March 1969 (R. Wheeler, A. Ziegler).
 Masindi: female collected on 16 September 1906 (Chapin 1953).
 Toro: females collected on 2 February and 3 March (Jackson 1938).
 Rwenzori National Park: one ringed on 5 March 1971 (M.P.L. Fogden).
 Mbarara: adult male seen in March 1970 (G.N. Harrington).

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- P.L. Britton, Box 90163, Mombasa.

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ARABIAN GOLDEN SPARROWS *PASSER EUCHLORUS* IN SOMALIA AND DJIBOUTI The Arabian Golden Sparrow *Passer euchlorus* has had an unstable taxonomic history. Originally described as *Auripasser euchlorus*, it was later regarded by White (1963) as a subspecies of *Passer luteus*. Subsequently, Hall & Moreau (1970) again raised it to specific status, and regarded it and two other atypical sparrows, *P. luteus* and *eminibey*, as being divergent members of a superspecies.

Passer euchlorus is shown by Hall & Moreau (1970) to have a very restricted range in southwestern Arabia and extreme northwestern Somalia; however, these authors indicate that it may not have survived on the Somali coast, where it was at one time established. This statement is probably based largely on the fact that Meinertzhagen (1954) was unable to find the bird there in 1949. Although *P. euchlorus* and *P. luteus* are allopatric, it will be shown here that their distributions are in even closer proximity than Hall & Moreau show on